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PROGRAMME PLANNING

Country and intercountry programmes and projects

FIFTH COUNTRY PROGRAMME FOR MALAWI

Note of the Administrator

I. Preparatory process

1. The fifth programming exercise started with the preparation of the advisory note. In line with the "growth through poverty reduction" strategy which the Government of Malawi presented to the Consultative Group meeting in 1990, the advisory note proposed to adopt the central theme of "Human Development: from Poverty to Self-Reliance" for the fifth country programme.

2. The Government established a joint Country Programme Development Committee composed of the Principal Secretaries of most ministries and UNDP. This Committee considered and accepted the advisory note. Subsequently, the Committee set up four programming teams to formulate the four core programmes to be supported during the fifth cycle. The composition of the teams was inter-ministerial, and they were chaired by the Principal Secretary of the lead ministry for the respective programme, and comprising the major ministries involved in the sector. The Ministry of Finance and the Department for Economic Planning and Development were represented in all four teams. Through intense discussions, the teams developed four programme frameworks within which 23 programme components were identified.

3. Parallel to the programming exercise, the country was undertaking the second phase of the National Technical Cooperation and Assistance Programme (NaTCAP) exercise, preparing the Technical Cooperation Programme. The two processes have been mutually reinforcing. The preparation of the country

programme also took into account the findings of an in-depth assessment of the fourth country programme which was undertaken in November 1990.

4. Particular attention has been paid to mutually reinforcing activities among donors during the preparatory process of the fifth country programme. A United Nations system collaborative programming exercise on poverty alleviation has been initiated, involving the five Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP) members and other United Nations agencies represented in the country. The purpose of the exercise is to present a United Nations-system anti-poverty programme for Malawi and to identify concrete areas of collaboration.

II. Analytical commentary on the country programme

5. Four core national programmes have been formulated on the basis of the salient features of poverty in Malawi. The first programme focuses on smallholder agricultural productivity. Its objective is to enhance household food security through improvements in the policy environment, increased application of on-farm research, expanded coverage of extension services, increased access to farm inputs and labour-saving technology, better environmental monitoring and management, and a more sustainable utilization of forestry and fisheries resources.

6. The second programme concentrates on small enterprise development. Its principal objective is to create alternative non-farm income opportunities to reduce poverty. UNDP support will concentrate on informal sector entrepreneurs to help improve the policy environment in which they operate; strengthen and develop their business, managerial and technical skills; and enhance their access to credit, appropriate technology, and marketing services.

7. The third programme concerns social development. Its main objective is to strengthen the capacity to provide social services (comprising basic education, primary health care, low-cost housing, rural transport, and water and sanitation) to the poorest segments of the population in the local impact areas, where emphasis will be placed on the development of alternative delivery systems through increased community involvement.

8. The fourth programme focuses on management for development. Its key goal is to create efficient and effective management capacities for economic and social advancement. The formation of a competent and motivated leadership to steer and implement development activities at local levels will be of critical importance in the implementation of anti-poverty programmes.

9. The fifth country programme for Malawi has been formulated on the basis of the programme approach. It reflects national programmes sharply targeted on the poorest segments of the population and on the local authorities that service them. Six local impact areas were selected for an intensive and integrated implementation of the four programmes; the basis for their selection was their low Human Development Index (HDI), using the available

poverty indicators. The country programme reflects funding requirements for $110.5 million and envisages cost-sharing contributions of $31.766 million and complementary assistance of $16.6 million from UNDP-administered funds to supplement the IPF.

10. Another characteristic of this country programme is the integration of seven cross-programme strategies into the programme components. They include: women in development, population, environment, human immune deficiency virus/acquired immune deficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) pandemic, appropriate technology, employment and popular participation. They will be operationalized through the identification of relevant components which will serve as "home bases" that will provide technical advisory services to all components. Also, provision has been made to involve NGOs in the practical implementation of the cross-programme strategies.

III. Management of country programme implementation

11. In line with the recommendations of the General Assembly and the Governing Council calling for greater government responsibilities in the execution of technical cooperation activities, the fifth country programme will accelerate the process of national execution.

12. For each of the four core programmes, identical management mechanisms have been defined. They comprise a programme steering committee which will oversee the progress and orientation of each programme, ensuring the support and commitment of the various ministerial departments, NGOs and other partners involved in the country programme.

13. Each programme will have a programme coordination and support unit. The units will be the principal mechanism through which the Government will assume national execution responsibilities. Each unit will be headed by a full-time national programme coordinator and assisted by a United Nations programme adviser.

14. For each programme component, a focal point will be established in the relevant ministry/institution. A national component manager will be identified who will be assisted by technical United Nations advisers as needed.

15. The implementation of the programmes and their components in the local impact areas will be the responsibility of the district teams. These teams will be headed by the district development officers and composed of the district staff assigned to the programmes. United Nations Volunteer specialists, NGO personnel and the existing local administrations will assist in the implementation of the programmes.

16. Monitoring and evaluation of the fifth country programme will rely on the work undertaken by the coordination and support units. The mid-term review will provide the opportunity for assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the programme approach and execution arrangements.

17. The Malawi country programme is a pioneering programme in the sense that it constitutes one of the first major attempts to operationalize the programme approach.

IV. Recommendations of the Administrator

18. The areas of concentration of the fifth country programme correspond not only to the Government's development priorities but also to the recommendations of Governing Council decision 90/34. Moreover, the fifth country programme has been formulated on the basis of the programme approach and will promote national execution to the fullest possible extent consistent with the Government's capacity to assume these responsibilities.

19. The Administrator therefore recommends that the Governing Council approve the fifth country programme for Malawi.